

valve manifold as shown in the drawings, particularly Figures 1 and 2, into which pressure lines (14, 16, from a main pipe line (10)) are fed.

In the mechanical arts of plumbing and pipe work, the term "flange" is typically used to refer to *an actual raised rim or lip* of a fitting. The "flange" (40) that the Examiner refers to is actually the *body of the manifold* (18). Although this body (40) of manifold (18) is provided with a number of inlets and outlets, it is **not** provided with a take-off channel for linking a first port with a central bore, nor is it provided with a feed channel for linking a first port with a second port.

Furthermore, the construction disclosed in Anderson et al. is not provided with a second port which links the exterior of the body of the manifold (18).

Thus, none of the structural features of manifold (18) could be described as a "pipe coupling flange", and accordingly, it is respectfully maintained that pending claim 1 is clearly novel over the Anderson et al. reference.

With reference to the cited Rensch et al. patent, it is still respectfully maintained that there is no disclosure of a pipe coupling flange in this document. Instead, Rensch et al. discloses a multiple valve assembly (10) that has an inlet to and an outlet from, a flow channel (23) along with an outlet channel (24) and an inlet channel (25) each of which is provided with a valve (16, 19). The channels (24, 25) may be described as first and second ports for receiving valves. However, a valve assembly (10) is **not** also provided with a take-off channel for linking the first port with a central bore, i.e., flow channel (23) or a feed channel for linking the first port with a second port, nor a second port that is linked to the exterior of the valve assembly. Indeed, both channels (24, 25) are linked with a central bore, i.e., the flow channel (23). Accordingly, it is respectfully maintained that pending claim 1 is clearly novel over the Rensch et al. patent.

With reference now to the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103, it is respectfully submitted that considering either the Anderson et al. or Rench et al. patents in view of the Suckow patent does not lead to the invention as claimed in any of claims 3, or 8-23. Although there is disclosure of a pipe line (12) which has two parts joined together by an orifice plate (14) and two flanges, these flanges are not of the type claimed in claim 1. Each flange has attached to it a pressure line, each line being provided with a valve, and in this regard, the embodiment shown in Figure 1 appears to be similar to the prior art shown in Figures 1 and 2 of the present application.

The detail shown in the remaining figures of the Suckow patent relates to manifold (20) and indeed, the title of the Suckow patent is "Unitized Instrument Manifold", to which the teachings of the patent are directed. This reference is not understood to disclose a pipe coupling flange comprising a central bore, and more than one point for receiving a valve, nor does this patent disclose a take-off channel, nor a feed channel, nor any of the linking structures described in claim 1.

It is respectfully noted that since the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103 is directed to claims 18 and 20, each of which either refer to, or include the limitations, of claim 1, it is clear that the reading of either Anderson or Rench et al., in view of Suckow, does not render claims 18 and 22 obvious. This is because of the lack of disclosure in each of these three documents regarding a pipe coupling flange, as per claim 1, a pipe coupling assembly, as per claim 18, or a pipe coupling as per claim 22.

In view of the foregoing formal allowance of claims 1-26 is believed to be in order and is respectfully solicited. Should the Examiner wish to speak with applicant's attorneys, they may be reached at the number indicated below.

U.S. Serial No. 10/522,489
Amendment dated March 26, 2009
Response to Office Action of October 27, 2008

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required in connection with this submission to Deposit Account No. 23-0785.

Respectfully submitted,

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I hereby certify that this paper is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage at First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450 on **March 26, 2009**.

